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ABSTRACT

Research on the locus of control variable in recent years has been quite extensive; however, cross-cultural studies have been rather sparse in this area. Differences among adults from the United States (N=194) and India (N=376) on the locus of control variable as measured by Rotter's Internal-External scale were studied. Each sample included equal numbers of men and women and 20-30 year olds and 40-50 year olds. Results indicated that men saw themselves as more effective than women across the two cultures. The Americans felt more in control of their lives than did the Indians. Socioeconomic status which gave equal weight to educational and occupational status was a major determinant with the American sample. Comparisons were also made on subscales consisting of system control, personal control, and control ideology. For Americans, the major significant factor on all three subscales was socioeconomic status. Among the Indians younger women felt more effective than the other groups in terms of system and personal controls. Each subgroup within the two cultures was also compared with their counterparts; the results indicated that the Americans were significantly more internal, suggesting that this current shift away from externality should be noted in future research. (Author/RC)

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Locus of Control
Across Two Cultures

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Research in the locus of control variable in recent years has been quite extensive. Lefcourt (1976) in his review warns that the construct needs to be understood in its theoretical context and cautions against its use without a rationale. Locus of control dimension deals with perceived generalized expectancy of reinforcement and is only one of the variables determining behavior. The belief system represents a variable and even though persons have in the literature been described as internals or externals, the terms can only be used in a relative context. The internal end of the variable represents belief in personal control over contingencies of reinforcements, and the external end represents belief that external forces, e.g., luck, fate or powerful others control one's behavior. Obviously, very few persons can fall at either extreme.

Within these constraints, a large body of research has established the role of the variable in a series of characteristic behaviors (Phares, 1973, Lefcourt, 1976). Furthermore, Jessor, Graves, Hanson and Jessor (1968) have pointed out in their theoretical analysis that personality system variables have parallels at sociocultural levels. Locus of control is a personality belief system and has parallel socio-cultural belief systems. Study of the variable across cultures should help shed some light on such a relationship.

Cross-cultural studies have been rather sparce in the area. The very studies that have included Indians have come up with an unexpected finding. Carment (1974) in comparing Indian and Canadian workers and students found that the Indians, across both groups, were more internal than their Canadian counterparts.

Parsons and Schneider (1974) compared scores for students from several countries, namely, the United States, Canada, West Germany, Italy, France, Japan, India and Israel and found that the Indians formed the most extreme point of internality and Japan the most extreme form of externality. A recent study (Khanna & Khanna, 1979) which dealt with a larger and a more heterogeneous sample from India indicated that the means for the Indian sample were less internal than those reported by Carment. The study also confirmed earlier findings of significant sex differences and found significant differences across socio-economic status and religious affiliations.

The present study attempted to compare United States and Indian differences across sex, age and socio-economic status along the variable.

Sample

The Indian sample consisted of 376 subjects which had already been reported on (Khanna & Khanna, 1979) and included students, housewives, professionals and white collar workers who were tested anonymously, individually and in groups in various settings.

The United States sample consisted of 194 subjects similarly including students, housewives, white/blue collar workers, professionals and managerial staff. They represented equal numbers of 20-30 year-olds and 40-50-year olds. They were all caucasians. In another study, race had been found to be significantly related to locus of control (Khanna, Khanna, Joure & Frye, 1978) and thus needs to be studied as a major determinant.

Procedure

Rotter's I-E Scale with additional questions about age, sex

occupational and educational status was administered anonymously.

Results

The total score for the I-E Scale was analyzed as well as scores for three subscales, "systems control", "personal control" and "control ideology" (Khanna & Khanna, 1979).

The total scores will be presented first. A 2x2x2x2 ANOVA for Nationality (U. S. - Indian), Socio-economic Status (middle and upper middle class and lower middle class), sex and age (20-30 year-olds and 40-50 year-olds) revealed significant main effect for nationality and sex. The Americans as a group were far more internal (mean 8.01) than the Indians (mean 10.12). Men were also more internal (mean 8.9) than women (mean 10.10). Interestingly, the American scores may represent a reversal of a trend towards externality noted by the authors earlier (Khanna & Khanna, 1979) and by Rotter (1974) among others. The present group represented a more heterogeneous sample than some of the earlier reported ones. Parsons and Schneider's (1974) student group from the United States is likely to be comparable to the present group of 20-30 year-old American males. A comparison between the two groups (mean 9.95 vs 8.50) showed a significant shift towards internality (t value 2.07 $p. < .05$). The 20-30 year-old American women also had a lower mean though the shift was not significant. Since the American 40-50 year-olds were more internal than the younger group though not significantly so, that would represent a further shift from the Parsons and Schneider's sample.

Generally speaking, the cross-cultural literature in the area has shown that sex is a significant variable in locus of

(Khanna, Khanna, Joure & Frye, 1978). Table 1 confirms that finding. Women continue to be somewhat more external than men (women mean = 10.04, men mean = 8.91).

Only one of the two-way interactions was significant and that is between nationality and the socio-economic status. Socio-economic status was determined by a modification of Hollingshead and Redlich's (1958) formula, and gave equal weight to educational and occupational status. Generally speaking, the groups were somewhat more homogeneous than the authors would have preferred and were divided only in two groups, the upper and middle middle class, and the lower middle class. The American upper and middle middle class were more internal than their Indian counterparts. In each case, the higher socio-economic status group was more internal than the lower socio-economic group.

The results were then analyzed for three subscales. Following Carment (1974) the three subscales are (1) Systems Control-the extent to which it is believed that people can change socio-political elements of society, (2) Personal Control-the extent to which a person believes that he can control what happens in his own life and is measured by all these items which are stated in the first person and, (3) Control Ideology-which refers to how much control one believes most people in society possess.

The analyses for the subscales were carried out separately for the Indian and the American samples, because of unavailability of some of the Indian new subscores. The two analyses will be compared across the two cultures. For the Systems Control subscale, in the Indian sample none of the main effects showed any significance. In the American sample, SES affected the scores significantly (F 5.85 $p. < .01$). The more advantaged Americans

believed that people can change socio-political elements of society more so than did their less advantaged counterparts. In the Indian sample interaction between age and sex had been significant where younger women had been more internal than older women as compared to older men being more internal than younger men. Lack of such interaction in the American sample is likely a reflection of the socio-political differences in the two cultures. We may infer that the younger Indian women and the higher SES level Americans feel more effective than the other groups.

The second subscale refers to personal control and the degree to which a person believes that he can control what happens in his life. In the Indian sample, sex had significantly effected the score with the surprising finding that women were more internal than men. In the American sample SES was the only variable to significantly effect the scores (F 9.11 $p. < .003$).

In the third subscale, Control Ideology refers to how much control one believes most people in society possess. In the Indian sample, the only main effect had been contributed by religious affiliation, Hindus being more internal than non-Hindus. In the American sample, SES continued to be the only variable showing significant effects. The more advantaged Americans were more internal (mean = 3.28) than the less advantaged ones (mean = 4.65). None of the interactions were significant either.

Cross cultural comparisons on the two groups were further carried out by comparing means for each of the subscales. Since the individual subscale scores for the Indian sample were no longer available, standard deviations used in the calculations were averages of subgroups standard deviations.

Table II shows the t values for the Systems Control subscale. In all the comparisons, the American sample consistently scores more internally than the Indian sample to a significant extent. Not only are the Americans, as a group, more internal than the Indians, but the American males, American females, American 20-30 year-olds and the American 40-50 year-olds are all consistently more internal than their Indian counterparts. We can conclude that the Americans believe to a greater extent than the Indians, that people can change socio-political elements of society.

Table III shows a similar comparison for Personal Control. Here again, the Americans as a group and in the various subgroups concerned feel more in control of what happens in their lives than their Indian counterparts.

Table IV shows the results for Control Ideology, the extent of control one believes most people in society possess. Again, the Americans consistently feel that people possess more control than their Indian counterparts believe.

Discussion

The reported internality of the Indians observed by Carment (1974) and Parsons and Schneider (1974) seems to have somewhat erroded. The authors had earlier noted that a more heterogeneous sample from India with a few exceptions showed the Indian sample to be similar to the North American sample investigated by these researchers. The present American sample shows a reversal of a trend noted earlier towards externality. The present group is a more internal one than the Parsons and Schneider group tested about 6 to 7 years ago. Whether this is merely a difference in two samples or an expression of a broader belief system change,

remains to be seen. Within the American group, SES significantly effects the total score as well as the three subscales. It is possible that the present advantaged Americans see themselves as more effective than earlier groups had done.

Another interesting result is the persistence of sex differences across cultures. Surprisingly the Indian women feel more in charge of their personal lives than the men do as judged by the results on the Personal Control subscale. No such phenemenon parallels the beliefs of American women who tend to be more external than the men nevertheless.

The extent to which the present shift towards internality among the Americans persists, remains to be seen.

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TABLE I

ANOVA OF CROSS-CULTURAL TOTAL IE SCORES

SOURCE OF VARIATION	SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	p
MAIN EFFECTS	747.86	4	186.96	11.60	.000
Nationality	503.64	1	503.64	31.26	.000
Socio Economic Status (SES)	7.06	1	7.06	.44	.508
Sex	141.77	1	141.77	8.80	.003
Age	13.36	1	13.36	.83	.363
2-WAY INTERACTIONS	303.31	6	50.55	3.14	.005
Nationality X SES	187.17	1	187.17	11.62	.001
Nationality X SEX	.15	1	.15	.01	.924
Nationality X AGE	20.07	1	20.07	1.25	.265
SES X SEX	.10	1	.10	.01	.938
SES X AGE	1.89	1	1.89	.12	.732
SEX X AGE	6.61	1	6.61	.41	.522
3-WAY INTERACTIONS	69.34	4	17.34	1.08	.368
Nationality X SES X SEX	1.70	1	1.70	.11	.746
Nationality X SES X AGE	9.95	1	9.95	.62	.432
Nationality X SEX X AGE	2.68	1	2.68	.17	.684
SES X SEX X AGE	59.35	1	59.35	3.68	.055
4-WAY INTERACTIONS	.06	1	.06	.00	.950
Nationality X SES X SEX X AGE	.06	1	.06	.00	.950
EXPLAINED (SUM OF ACCOUNTED FOR VARIANCE)	1120.58	15	74.71	4.64	.000
RESIDUAL	9184.31	570	16.11		
TOTAL	10304.89	585	17.62		

TABLE II

CROSS CULTURAL t-TEST COMPARISONS ON IE SUBSCALES

SUBSCALE	MEAN	SD	N	t	p
SYSTEM CONTROL					
NATIONALITY					
Americans	2.24	1.59	194	4.64	.001
Indians	2.81	.96	375		
NATIONALITY X SEX					
American Males	2.14	1.58	125	4.61	.001
Indian Males	2.86	.96	200		
American Females	2.42	1.58	69	1.72	.04
Indian Females	2.77	.96	175		
NATIONALITY X AGE					
Americans 20 - 30 years old	1.14	1.30	96	11.21	.001
Indians 20 - 30 years old	2.82	.99	193		
Americans 40 - 50 years old	1.08	1.15	98	12.81	.001
Indians 40 - 50 years old	2.81	.92	182		

TABLE III

CROSS CULTURAL t-TEST COMPARISONS ON IE SUBSCALES

SUBSCALE	MEAN	SD	N	t	p
PERSONAL CONTROL					
NATIONALITY					
Americans	1.11	1.23	194	15.51	.001
Indians	2.68	.98	375		
NATIONALITY X SEX					
American males	1.04	1.26	125	13.40	.001
Indian Males	2.80	.95	200		
American Females	1.23	1.17	69	7.12	.001
Indian Females	2.55	.99	175		
NATIONALITY X AGE					
American 20 - 30 years old	1.14	1.30	96	9.04	.001
Indian 20 - 30 years old	2.59	1.26	193		
American 40 - 50 years old	1.08	1.16	98	12.54	.001
Indian 40 - 50 years old	2.78	.93	182		

Since individual subscale scores for the Indian sample were no longer available, the SD used in the above calculations are averages of subgroups SDs.

TABLE IV

CROSS CULTURAL t-TEST COMPARISONS ON IE SUBSCALES

SUBSCALE	MEAN	SD	N	t	p
CONTROL IDEOLOGY					
NATIONALITY					
Americans	4.02	2.49	194	14.05	.001
Indians	6.82	1.70	375		
NATIONALITY X SEX					
American Males	3.90	2.69	125	11.11	.001
Indian Males	6.91	1.75	200		
American Females	4.23	2.07	69	8.907	.001
Indian Females	6.71	1.62	175		
NATIONALITY X AGE					
American 20 - 30 years old	4.47	2.45	96	8.98	.001
Indian 20 - 30 years old	6.96	1.67	193		
American 40 - 50 years old	3.58	2.46	98	11.01	.001
Indian 40 - 50 years old	6.65	1.71	182		